

Supported by
Bureau of
Child Protective
Services
Virginia Department of Social
Services

WCPN

Editor
Joann Grayson, Ph.D.

Managing Editor
Charlotte McNulty, M.A.

Guest Reviewer
Lynne Nichols, B.S.W.

Winter, 1984

Virginia Child Protection Newsletter

Volume 10

Theatre ... A Prevention Strategy for Child Sexual Abuse

It was the morning before the opening of the Harrisonburg "showcase" performance of "Hugs and Kisses," a child sexual abuse prevention play. I was in my office (I'm a clinical psychologist) working with a forty year old incest victim.

Months of therapy had been paying off lately. Over the last several weeks, Sandra had been remembering long repressed incidents. Like most victims, the memories were not coming back intact, but rather in fragments, almost like "pictures"—a still life here, a smell there, a shadowy figure, a touch. The memories, and piecing them together, was and is an incredibly painful process.

I consider Sandra a true survivor. She's tough. Almost unflappable. Spunky. And she doesn't cry. Today was different. Wracked with sobs, shaking, throat so tight she could barely let words out, she described the most recent memories.

We already knew that she had been abused sexually by her father. This was not a close, slow-growing relationship but a series of rapes, starting at age seven. Recently Sandra remembered being sent to an aunt and uncle's to live for a year, where she was used for prostitution and pornography, along with some adults and a few other children. All these memories and their horrible details had been related with much hurt and agony, but no tears.

What Sandra shared that morning were memories of her first pregnancy, at age 12. Not knowing she was pregnant, she was confused by her aunt's constant checking about her menstrual periods. She remembers being sick and throwing up. She remembers the doctor who examined her—and the one who performed the abortion. She remembers the pain, the searing, awful pain.

But that's not why Sandra was crying. Sandra was crying, not for herself, but for the unborn child. The child who would never see a flower, be cuddled or know caring. "They can do what they like to me, but how could they kill my baby?"

Later that day, introducing the "Hugs and Kisses" showcase to a packed auditorium with standing-room only, I could not stop thinking about my morning with Sandra. While welcoming the audience, I was saying to myself, "I pray this is good. I need it to be. We have to be effective in prevention."



The cast of Theatre IV's "Hugs and Kisses."

What's Come Before

Child sexual abuse prevention efforts are new. Yet, their growth is rapid. There are now a wide variety of books, pamphlets, films, videocassettes, curriculum, training programs, and teaching videos available. Of all these selections, theatre has captured the hearts and attention of many. In several areas of the country, a theatre piece is the core of the prevention effort. In most cases, the play preceded the more traditional educational materials.

One of the first pioneers was Illusion Theater in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Founded as an ensemble in 1974, Illusion wanted to explore how theatre could be used to educate children about social issues. They teamed with Cordelia Anderson who worked in the Sexual Assault Unit of the Hennepin County Attorney's office.

The collaboration resulted in "Touch." It is a play for elementary children that is a series of vignettes. Each actor tells a mini-story as if it were their own experience. After each, Anderson or another mental health worker leads a dialogue about what kind of touch the actor has experienced. "We try to balance positive and negative touch and help children identify what to do if the touch is negative or confusing," Anderson noted.

A second show, "No Easy Answers," is aimed at teens. It addresses a broad range of topics related to sexuality—emerging sexuality, sex role images, teenage pregnancy, assertive communication, acquaintance rape, and incest.

Illusion Theater has gained national recognition for their contribution. Over 1100 groups have sponsored the program throughout the nation. They have reached over 280,000 children.

A second effort which is gaining increasing recognition is Bridgework Theater in Goshen, Indiana. Their productions are the results of nearly two years of hard work.

"We were heavily influenced by Illusion Theater, although we didn't wish to simply reproduce their work. Different things work in different places." Carol Plummer, Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Project Director at Bridgework Theatre, continued, "Goshen is a small town of 15,000 with a strong Mennonite influence. We are a classic, conservative, nice community. We felt that what worked in inner city Minnesota might not be the best option for our rural area. In 1979 a task force was established to deal with child sexual abuse prevention. We did long-term planning and an extensive public

(continued on page 2)

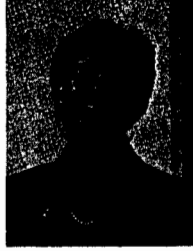


Virginia Chapter of the National Committee for the Prevention of Child Abuse
205 W. Franklin St., Richmond, Va. 23220

Meet the New Officers



President - JoAnne Tuohey (left) gives Cheryn Durrette, past president, a service award



Executive Vice President - Harriet Russell



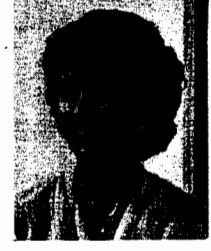
Vice President - Wendy Moore



Treasurer - Cam Murchinson



Recording Secretary - Lee McAlpine



Corresponding Secretary - Sue Gibson

April Is Child Abuse Prevention Month!

Your group can help! Sponsor a fundraiser to jointly benefit your group and VaNCPCA. Two ideas are offered below:

"Celebrity Night"

For this event, local celebrities (news media, performers, athletes, political figures, and others) wait on tables at a sponsoring restaurant. The "celebrities" donate all their tips to VaNCPCA and your group. Their slogan? "Tip Big-It's for Kids."

VaNCPCA will help your group contact restaurants and offer guidelines for the event. "Celebrity Night" was implemented last year by Sue Gibson in Norfolk. Even though the event demanded a great deal of effort, the rewards were great. It brought together many warm and caring individuals and raised \$2100.

The localities and restaurants currently committed are as follows: Norfolk - Courtney's, Clarke's, Intermission; Virginia Beach - Golden Dragon, The Raven; Richmond - Charley's, O'Malley's; Hampton - Aberdeen Barn; Roanoke - Charley's; Lynchburg - Charley's; Charlottesville - Charley's.

If you are interested in assistance, call JoAnne Tuohey at (804) 282-4255 during working hours.

Bumper Stickers

CHILD ABUSE

Your group can sell bumper stickers. VaNCPCA will send you a supply. You pay VaNCPCA \$.50 each for those you sell - return those you don't sell. Your group can determine the selling price and also raise money for your own projects. Some groups are selling the bumper stickers for \$1.00.



Theater... continued from p. 1

awareness campaign. Out of the work of the task force came two plays, 'Little Bear' for elementary school use and 'Out of the Trap' for teens (Editor's note: See descriptions in our Prevention Resource List, this issue). In 1980, Bridgework Theater received a federal grant to fund the productions."

Plummer's program is a comprehensive one. Before a school can book the show, teacher-training is required. Teachers are taught about the dynamics of sexual abuse, what to look for, how to report, and crisis counseling. After the play, teachers who feel comfortable do so lead a discussion. If a teacher is uncomfortable, a mental health professional takes the role of discussion leader. Leaders are given a guide to assist them in planning the discussion.

Does it work? Recently, the adolescent play was performed for 1200 students. Within six weeks, over 60 reports of sexual abuse had been received at social services!

"We are delighted by the reports," remarks Plummer. "However, our true aim is prevention. We like to think we can help children identify potentially dangerous situations before they happen."

Bridgework Theater offers consultation and training to communities and organizations wanting to start prevention efforts. The plays are available in videotape format. Curriculum is available to supplement the school plays. (See the Prevention Resource List, this issue, for details).

One Virginia community has worked with the Bridgework Theater. "Out of the Trap" was performed in Williamsburg this fall. According to Greg Richter, Ph.D., one of the sponsors of the event, the play was very well received. "We chose the play because it offered the prevention skills we

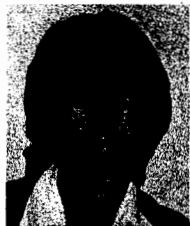
felt were needed, and it was doable on a local basis," explained Dr. Richter. "Bridgework Theatre provided consultation to our local actors and actresses. We sponsored the play as part of a public awareness campaign. It was performed four nights to a total audience of 300." A videotape showing excerpts from the play and comments from the audience is available from Virginia Department of Social Services, 8007 Discovery Drive, Richmond, Virginia 23288.

A similar effort, "Bubylonian Encounter," is the result of collaboration between the Kansas Committee for Prevention of Child Abuse, the Theatre for Young America, and Johnson County Mental Health Center. In this drama, a space character, "Bub," lands on earth, encased in a protective bubble. "Bub" has never experienced the sense of touch. Two adults find "Bub," help her break the bubble, and teach her about touching—good, bad, confusing, and "forced sexual."

"The main message of 'Bubylonian Encounter' is to tell someone if you are touched in a way you don't like," explained Jenith Hoover, Administrative Secretary for The Kansas Committee for Prevention of Child Abuse. "The show is very effective. The play was tested on 82 children grades 3-6. The results showed that after viewing the play, 99% were able to recognize forced sexual touch from other forms of touching, 82% knew how to respond if approached sexually, and 86% understood that family members could sexually abuse them. Additionally, 99.6% of the children enjoyed the play."

The response to "Bubylonian Encounter" has been overwhelmingly positive. In Kansas, 17 school districts have incorporated the play into the school curriculum. Videotapes of the show (available for \$40 rental or \$200 purchase) have been viewed in 42 states, as well as Canada, England, France, and Germany.

(continued on page 6)



Editorial comment...

Radical Prevention Strategy

It took all weekend for me to read "I Never Told Anyone" (see book review this issue). I kept picking up the book, reading a bit, and putting it down. Stories about assault share a surprisingly number of similarities. After reading a few, one can predict the highpoints. Only the details seem to change.

By the time I was a quarter finished, I was mad. I stayed mad all weekend—and for weeks. These first-person accounts are articulate and powerful.

As I read, a number of thoughts took place. How do we end this particular bit of inhumanity? An idea that occurred to me is that people are sexually abusing children because they get away with it. A child is a bargain sexually. Consider...if Tom (an adult) approaches Mary (an adult) and asks for sex, a number of complex things can happen. She may reject him. She may ask him to satisfy her sexual needs (to "perform," if you like). She may demand a commitment—or marriage first or at some later point in time. She might ask if he has V.D. She may want a relationship and wish to share other experiences together. She may ask for money, time, attention, or favors. She may discuss his sexual performance later to his or her friends. The likelihood that she will simply satisfy his needs and ask little or nothing in return is small. A child, in contrast, is easily tricked and asks little, allowing the perpetrator to concentrate solely upon meeting his/her needs. Sexually, a child is the all-American dream—something for nothing.

Certainly educating children to say no, to tell someone, and to assert their rights, will give children power and will have immediate consequences. I think that power should be extended. In our society, if someone damages you or your property, not only are there criminal charges, but there are civil penalties. Criminal charges exist for child sexual abuse. However, I've never heard a civil damage lawsuit.

A child is unlikely to bring a monetary damage suit against an adult—especially a close family member. In Virginia, the statute of limitations, which is 2 years, would become effective at age 18. This means that an adult who was victimized as a child must file a damage claim by age 20 or forfeit the right to do so.

Many incest victims have not achieved the needed maturity or independence by age 20 to initiate a suit. What if the time

limit were extended or if there were no time limit? I work with a number of women who are barely eking out an existence, whose emotional scars have prevented them from developing, not just interpersonally, but career-wise. While these victims continue to suffer at age 30, 40, or 50, their fathers, in some cases, have considerable wealth.

I asked my clients "What if you could sue...collect damages from him?" One said, "Gee, that man would pay for my graduate education—he owes me that much." Another giggled, actually giggled (I hadn't seen her smile for months). Another reaction was, "What a great way to get even—it would really make him admit how much he hurt me."

Most incest victims desire some recognition of the pain experienced, and the damage done. Most question why they are proceeding through life scarred while their fathers, often denying the incest entirely, seem happy, successful and unconcerned.

Few persons would have the strength to sue their relatives for monetary damages. So what would even a few well-publicized cases do? The accountability might serve as a deterrent for some men who value their status and financial security. More importantly, I think that seeing even one successful suit would help the self-esteem of many victims. Money never pays for spiritual or bodily loss. The person paralyzed, blinded, frightened or maimed is not truly compensated for the loss of life's enjoyment. However, the damage owed is a formal way of society saying "You are worthwhile. You have been harmed through no fault of your own." We need to say that to incest victims in every way possible, since part of the damage is feeling guilty for the perpetrator's actions.

Reading the stories triggered a second line of thought. I began to ponder the perpetrators. We know very little about them. Why isn't more research directed at discovering what motivates these people? Why are most of them, to the best of our knowledge, male? If sexual approach by adults to children is so common (all current evidence indicates it is), what in our society (or in human nature) permits one human being to so easily and thoughtlessly destroy a much smaller dependent person?

Let us educate children about their rights. Let us also give adults the ability to sue for damages done by parents when raising them. Let us do anything we can to increase the power of victims. Meanwhile, let us recognize that true prevention lies with the perpetrator. We need to know if child sexual abusers are simply a subtype or variation of those who abuse power over others or if they are a distinct class of offenders with particular characteristics. We need to develop better ways for adults to get their sexual and emotional needs met. We need to study power and why people abuse it. We need to educate children on

how to meet their needs without exploiting others (children sexually abuse other children, too). We need a method to identify, early, those people likely to have problems with personal power and intervene prior to the offense as we're doing with perinatal screening programs.

Victims need, and deserve, our attention. However, to study only the wounded and ignore the enemy will never win a war.

—Joann Grayson

Prevention: Does It Depend Upon Prediction?

Prevention is always preferable to treatment. Yet, often prevention is difficult, sometimes impossible, because of lack of knowledge about the problem one is trying to prevent. This is particularly true for child abuse and neglect. There is still much to be learned about the causes and motivations for abusive behavior.

Assuming one understands the causes of a particular behavior, a disease or disorder, there are two general approaches to prevention. One is to apply the prevention technique to the entire population. If the technique is simple, easy and relatively inexpensive, this solution works well. For example, some communities have added flouridation to their water supply and have drastically reduced the amount of tooth decay. Childhood vaccinations are another example. If the prevention techniques are expensive, time-consuming, have side effects and/or risk factors, the strategy of routinely applying the technique to the general population becomes difficult or is not cost effective. In these cases, prevention techniques tend to be applied only to those individuals deemed to be high risk for the problem.

Child abuse and neglect usually fits in the second category. Many prevention strategies are time-consuming and expensive. For example, perinatal or health visitor programs are felt to enhance parenting skills and decrease the risk of abuse. However, such programs require staffing, materials, equipment, transportation costs, and usually involve individual

as well as group contact. Because of the expense, many of the perinatal programs try to focus on serving "high risk" clients.

How do programs identify those who are high risk? Usually by the use of a prediction tool.

What's involved in prediction? The dictionary says prediction is "To state, tell about or make known in advance, especially on the basis of special knowledge." Sounds very mystical. So, how is it done?

Generally, scientists try to predict one event based on its relationship to another. "If knowing X implies some knowledge of Y, a prediction of Y from X is possible..." (Ferguson, 1976). For instance, in order to determine success in college (Y), we must know something about the variables that enter into determining that success (X). For most behaviors, scientists work first to determine what the variables are and how to test for them. Then they combine these variables into an instrument. Finally, the predictive instrument is tested using a large number of people to statistically determine if the hypothetical relationship does exist.

Once a predictive instrument is designed, are we then guaranteed success? Hardly. "Even an exceptional predictive instrument will involve measurement error" (Starr, 1982). That means there will be times when the information will suggest an event will not occur when it actually does (false negative) or, that an event will occur when it actually does not (false positive). In general, when an instrument

is valid and reliable, the measurement error is small and expected. In some cases, error doesn't really matter. However, when the error affects human lives, there is a real problem.

Predicting child abuse certainly does affect human lives. Therefore it is important to examine the current state of the art. What are the problems and benefits of child abuse prediction?

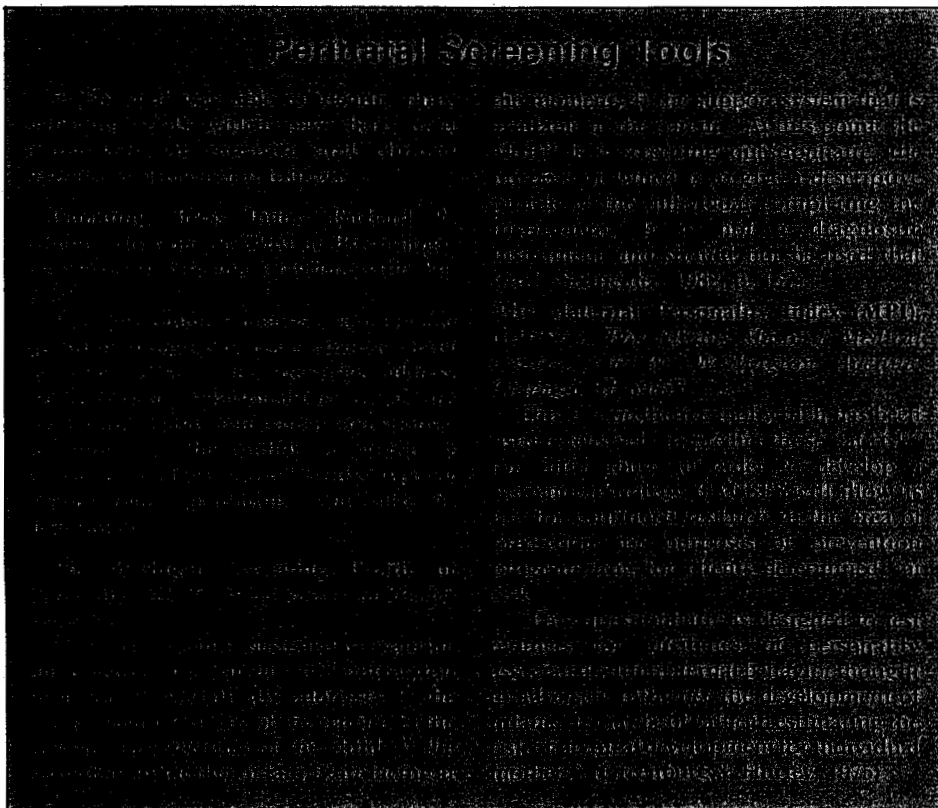
Problem: To predict, one must first define. What is the definition of child abuse or neglect? Is it uniform? Gelles (1982) suggests that it is not. "If we are to adequately predict the occurrence of a phenomenon, we must certainly be able to explain it...One fundamental problem confronting those who attempt to explain, predict, and prevent child abuse is that there is no objective phenomenon that can be defined as 'child abuse'" (p.1).

He cites research he conducted using 500 professionals dealing with child abuse. He asked these professionals a variety of questions designed to determine their concept of the phenomenon called "child abuse." The analysis of the data indicated a considerable variance within and between professional groups as to how child abuse is defined. "The implications for predicting child abuse and neglect would appear to be that if we are to predict the abuse and neglect of children, a rigorous definition of what child abuse and neglect is will be required before any predictive instrument can be fruitfully employed. Without such a definition, we cannot begin to predict the phenomenon of child abuse; instead we are predicting a variety of phenomenon based on the professional training, experience, organizational contexts, and perceptual frameworks of various professionals and professional groups" (Gelles, 1982, p. 28).

Problem: Errors. Gelles (1982) explains, "Errors will be made and cases will be misclassified...Errors of failing to recognize potential child abuse will be part of the enterprise and will sometimes involve tragic outcomes. Many such errors are currently made daily, and any such efforts to reduce such errors will be well received. However, as predictive efforts are increased, more errors of the other type—mistakenly labeling a nonabusive caretaker as an 'abuser' will be made" (p. 2).

The 'likelihood of this problem is supported by a study conducted by Kotelchuck (1982). When analyzing data using 401 subjects—201 control subjects and 201 abuse or neglect subjects—he found significant errors in his ability to predict. "...even knowing which children were and were not abused, using our best discriminators from this study, we would have predicted 19% of the control group as abused and neglected, and 25% of the

(continued on page 5)



VCPN Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Materials Resource List

Compiled and Reviewed by Joann Grayson, Ph.D.

Books for Children



No More Secrets for Me by Oralee Wachter, \$12.95, plus \$.50 postage, 47 pages, 1983.
Available from: Little, Brown and Company, 34 Beacon St., Boston, MA. 02106.

This book is a combination of four separate stories each dealing with a child who is approached sexually by an adult. Darryl is propositioned by his babysitter, Nickie is approached by an older man who hangs out at the soda shop. Greg's counselor at camp asks him to play a secret game involving both of them removing their clothes. Finally, Maureen is involved in an uncomfortable situation in which she is fondled by her step-father.

Each story, handled with sensitivity and insight, is related in a non-threatening and matter-of-fact manner. It is always made clear that the child is not at fault for being approached. The book's simple language and its similarity to other books that attempt to teach problem-solving to young children make sexual safety seem similar to fire safety or traffic safety—another necessary and vital lesson to be learned. The deliberate lack of sensationalism is a definite strength. For ages 4 and up, this book is an invaluable addition to any library.



My Very Own Book About Me (Super Kids) by Jo Stowell, M.A., M.Ed. and Mary Dietzel, R.N., M.S.W., \$3, 39 pages, no date.
Available from: Rape Crisis Resource Library, Lutheran Social Services of Washington, N. 1226 Howard, Spokane, WA 99201. Tel. (509) 327-7761.

Written in 1981, this book is a result of twelve years of experience working with children in the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of child sexual abuse. It is a workbook that explores the different senses of the child. After helping the child define what sensations he/she likes and dislikes, the book explores problems with touch. The workbook pauses for problem solving exercises allowing the child to draw or write solutions as well as to say or hear them.

The children in the book are termed "Superkids," a tactic likely to appeal to today's children. Assertion skills, and the concept of children's rights to say "No" are stressed.

The dynamic, involved approach to learning adopted by the workbook is more likely to enhance retention of concepts than merely viewing a film or listening to an explanation.

The book price includes a free *Guide for Parents*. This two-page guide alerts parents to how they can assist with the teaching of each concept. A *Guide for Therapists* (\$2.50) is a sixteen page booklet examining therapy issues addressed in the workbook. It suggests practical ways to handle difficult questions from children (such as "Why do adults molest children?"). It contains brief descriptions of actual therapy incidents and child reactions. A similar *Guide for Teachers* (\$1.50, 12 pages) gives suggestions for adapting the workbook for classroom use.

This set of materials has the advantage of being in use since 1980. The workbook has been revised twice. The public schools in Spokane, Washington, have incorporated the book into their safety curriculum.

Also available: Teacher training videotape (20 minutes). A classroom presentation of *My Very Own Book About Me* is included. Sold at cost: 1/2" VHS \$25, 3/4" \$30 plus \$2 postage and handling.

Frances Ann Speaks Out: My Father Raped Me by Helen Chetin, \$2.50 plus \$1.00 postage, 20 pages, 1977.

Available from: New Seed Press, P.O. Box 9488, Berkeley, CA 94709.



The New Seed Press is a not-for-profit feminist collective that publishes books for children. "Frances Ann Speaks Out" is a sensitive dialogue between a teenager incest victim and her grandmother with whom she is now living. This book is not prevention-oriented in that it does not present strategies for children who are sexually approached. Rather, it is a "consciousness-raising" book for those who want to learn about how victims feel and what an incest experience is like. For children 11 and up.

The following books for children were not available for review:

A Very Touching Book by Jan Hindman, McClure - Hindman Books, P.O. Box 208, Duckee, OR 97905 (\$7.95 plus 75¢ postage).

My Very Own Special Body Book by Kerry Bassett, Hawthorne Press, Redding, CA 96001, 1981.

Something Happened to Me by P. Sweet, Mother's Courage, Racine, WI 53401, 1981.

Books for Children, continued

Once I Was a Little Bit Frightened by Joy Williams, Rape and Abuse Crisis Center, P.O. Box 1655, Fargo, ND 58107, 1980.

Why Me? The Story of Jenny by Patricia Dizenzo, Avon Books, 959 Eighth Ave., New York, NY 10019, 1976.

Fair Game by Jacklyn O. Hanlon, Dell Publishing Company, Inc., 1 Dag Hammorskjold Plaza, New York, NY 10017, 1978.

Did You Hear What Happened to Andrea? by Gloria Miklowitz, Dalacarte Press, 1979.

Are You in the House Alone? by Richard Peck, Viking Press, Inc., 625 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10022, 1975.

Private Zone by Frances Dayee, The Charles Franklin Press, Washington, 1982.

Books for Parents

No More Secrets: Protecting Your Child from Sexual Assault by Caren Adams and Jennifer Fay, \$3.95 plus \$1.00 postage, 1981.
Available from: Impact Publishers, P.O. Box 1094, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401.

A book written for parents with suggestions on how to deal with child sexual abuse. The book explains ways of telling your children about sexual abuse, suggests games to teach prevention, lists several behavioral signs which might indicate sexual assault, tells what to do if an assault has occurred, and suggests ways to deal with the crisis and its aftermath.



The following books were not available for review:

The Silent Children: A Parent's Guide to the Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse by Linda Sanford, Doubleday & Co., New York, NY, 1980.

Protective Parenting: The Art of Teaching Children about Child Sexual Abuse, Crime Control Planning Board, 444 LaFayette Rd., St. Paul, MN 55101, no date.

The Touching Problem by Sandra Kleven and Joan Krebill, the Coalition for Child Advocacy, Bellingham, WA 98227, 1981.

Coloring Books (not available for review)

"Red Flag, Green Flag People," 27 pages, \$4 each, 1980.

Created and distributed by: The Rape and Abuse Crisis Center, P.O. Box 1655, Fargo, ND 58107.

This coloring book discusses different types of touching and also defines sexual assault and incest. Program guide (\$12 each) and videotapes (1/2", one hour, \$125; 3/4" one hour, \$150) are also available.

"Good Touch, Bad Touch," no page information, no price information, no date.

Created and distributed by: Rape Crisis Center of Montgomery County, Inc., P.O. Box 1179, Norristown, PA 19401.

Coloring book about personal safety for ages 3-7. Helps the child understand and learn difference between good and bad touch, ways to say "No," and what to do if sexual contact with an adult is unavoidable.

"You Belong to You," no page information, no price information, 1980.
Available from: YWCA Sexual Assault Crisis Center, Flint, MI.

Plays

"In Touch"

Contact: Centre Theater Group, 428 W. 26th, Spokane, WA 99203. Tel. (509) 838-4367.

A 20 minute presentation portraying good, bad, and confusing touch.

"Hugs and Kisses"

Contact: Theatre IV, 6 N. Robinson St., Richmond, VA 23220. Tel. (1-800) 235-8687 (in Richmond 353-1048). Cost: Average \$300.

A 40-minute musical followed by a 15-minute discussion. The play relates the story of a young girl who is the victim of child sexual abuse. Study guide included.



Plays, continued



"Touch" and "No Easy Answers"

Contact: Illusion Theater, 528 Hennepin Ave., #309, Minneapolis, MN 55403. Tel. (612) 339-4944. Cost: \$1200 plus transportation.

"Touch" explains sexual abuse in a balanced way that is simple and nonthreatening. The presentation is geared for children kindergarten through eighth grade. "Touch" is a playful piece which gives children a chance to examine various kinds of touches; touch that is nurturing, delightful and/or funny to touch that is confusing, uncomfortable and/or exploitive. Also available in film (see film listing).



"No Easy Answers" is a new presentation geared particularly for junior and senior high school students. "No Easy Answers" is based on research with students in Minneapolis public schools and is designed to teach adolescents about protection and prevention skills which incorporate the concepts developed in "Touch." Available in videocassette format (see film listing).



"Little Bear" and "Out of the Trap"

Contact: Bridgework Theater, Goshen, IN. Tel. (219) 534-1085. Cost: \$450 plus mileage and expenses.

Four appealing animals—"Big Bear," "Little Bear," "Big Moose," and "Little Moose" capture the imagination of elementary children. "Big Bear" begins giving "Little Bear" touches. At first, these are good, but later become confusing and finally exploitive. After each touch experience, "Little Bear" asks the audience how they think he feels and what he should do. Common suggestions are acted out.

In "Out of the Trap," a 14 year old girl is approached sexually by her uncle. She tries to tell her parents. They react with disbelief, anger, and confusion. She finally finds peer support and talks to an outside adult. For adolescents. Videotape format also available. Cost: \$250 purchase or \$35 rental per week.

"Bubblonian Encounter"

Contact: Bubblonian Productions, Inc., 7204 W. 80th St., Overland Park, KS 66204. Tel. (913) 648-4602 or Kansas Committee to Prevent Child Abuse, 435 S. Kansas, 2nd floor, Topeka, KS 66603. Tel. (913) 354-7738.

"Bub," a spacecreature from Bubblonia, comes to earth in an invisible bubble. Two adults, Archie and Betty, help "Bub" break her bubble and teach her about touch—good, bad, confusing, and "forced sexual." The troupe is no longer doing live performances but will provide training and consultation to communities who want to present a production using local actors. Prices available upon request. Also available on 16 mm film (\$350) or on 1/2" or 3/4" videocassette (\$200 purchase or \$40 rental).

Films and Videotapes (not available for review)

Speak Up, Say No! 6 minutes, 1981, no price information.

Available from: Krause House, P.O. Box 880, Oregon City, OR 97045.

A filmstrip, cassette, and teaching guide for use in grades K-6. Teaches about "okay and not okay touches" and how and when to "Speak Up, Say No!"

Who Do You Tell? 11 minutes, 1980, Cost: rental, \$40/wk.; purchase \$215. Available from: Motorola Teleprograms, Inc., 4825 N. Scott St., Schiller Park, IL 60176 or Motorola Teleprograms, Inc., 3710 Commercial Ave., Northbrook, IL 60062.

This film, for ages 6-11, combines "animation" and "live" footage of real children talking openly and honestly about what they would or wouldn't do in mysterious, uncomfortable, or scary situations. Designed to encourage children to talk about their problems and concerns.

Negative Touch, Ways to Say No. 15 minutes, no date, no price information.

Available from: Society for Visual Education, 1345 Diversey Parkway, Chicago, IL 60614.

For 4th, 5th and 6th grade. Goal is to teach students to recognize and avoid negative touch.

Touches. slide show, no date, \$50.

Available from: Spokane Community Mental Health Center, S. 107 Division St., Spokane, WA 99202.

Slides with accompanying cassette tape narration. Deals with good, bad, and confusing touch.

Films and Videotapes, continued

The Super Kid Show, 15 minutes, no date, \$50.

Available from: Rape Crisis Network, Lutheran Social Services, N. 1226 Howard St., Spokane, WA 99201. Tel. (509) 327-7761.

Songs, stories, and puppets with 8 "Super-Kids" and two adults. Based on the book *My Very Own Book About Me* (see review under book section).

No More Secrets, 13 minutes, no date, \$300.

Available from: O.D.N. Productions, Inc., 74 Varick St., Suite 304, New York City, NY 10013. Tel. (212) 431-8923.

Developed under a grant from the National Center for Child Abuse and Neglect, this film won the 1982 National Mental Health Association's Award for Special Problems, and was selected by the World Congress of Mental Health as one of the best films for 1983.

The film presents three stories (situations) of abuse: an older brother who harrasses his younger sister when she undresses, a man who molests his 10 year old nephew under the pretext of wrestling and another who molests his daughter. It shows ways for the child to say "No" to adults who make them feel uncomfortable by touching. For ages 7-15.

No Easy Answers, time unknown, no date, no price information.

Available from: Indiana University, Audiovisual Department, Bloomington, IN 47405. Tel. (812) 335-8087.

Videocassette of Illusion Theatre's play "No Easy Answers" (see information under Plays).

Touch, time unknown, no date, no price information.

Available from: Media Ventures, 716 N. First St., Suite 231, Minneapolis, MN 55401.

A film screenplay version of Illusion Theatre's play "Touch" (see information under Plays).

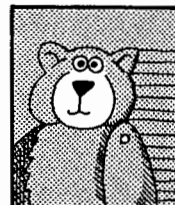
The following films are available from: AIMS Media, 626 Justin Ave., Glendale, CA 91201-9990.

Child Molestation: A Crime Against Children, Number 9709, 11 minutes, no date, \$235 (rental, \$30).

How you can tell who are the offenders, and what kids can do when molested. For intermediate/jr. high.

Roscoe's Rules, Number 9615, 10 minutes, no date, \$165 (rental, \$25).

Officer Dan and his little friend Roscoe, a delightful toy bear, teach children four special safety rules: we always go straight home from school the way we've been taught, we never get into a car without our parents' permission, we never accept gifts from strangers, we never walk or play in lonely places. For younger children.



Strangers We Meet, Number 9614, 10 minutes, no date, \$195 (rental, \$25).

A series of short dramatizations teach safety rules that youngsters should always follow whenever any stranger approaches them. The stories are of everyday events so that boys and girls can readily identify with the episodes. For younger children.

Girls Beware, 3rd edition, Number 9656, 12 minutes, no date, \$235 (rental, \$25).

Awareness that sexual attacks exist is seen as a responsibility of growing up. This film helps girls develop that awareness by showing typical situations that lead to danger; as importantly, it shows how those situations can be avoided. Four dramatic stories show the danger that is evident in contact with strangers and with familiar and trusted people. Does not deal with intra-family abuse. For preteens and teens.

Boys Beware, 3rd edition, Number 9655, 14 minutes, no date, \$275 (rental, \$25).

Boys, as well as girls need to know that they can be the target of sexual attack. Three dramatized vignettes show typical approaches used by molesters of young teenage boys and point out that molesters are often people known and trusted by the victim. The non-sensational, realistic approach of the film helps boys realize the existence of the problem, shows them commonsense precautions, and emphasizes the importance of reporting incidents. Does not deal with intra-family abuse. For preteens and teens.

Child Molestation: When to Say "No," Number 9561, 13½ minutes, no date, \$265 (rental, \$25).

Without sensationalism and scare techniques, this film shows that child molesters do exist and teaches young viewers the things they can do to protect themselves. Four vignettes tell the story of incidents with strangers. Youngsters can identify easily with the children and their predicaments as shown in the film, and learn the right way to say "no." For younger children to preteens.



The Dangerous Stranger (3rd edition), Number 9616, 10 minutes, no date, \$175 (rental, \$25).

Children themselves, properly informed, are their own best defense against the child molester. A series of vignettes dramatize the methods that molesters use to win a youngster's confidence: gifts, friendly conversation, the offer of a ride. How to act when approached by a stranger—perhaps just how to say "No, thank you"—is the film's most valuable lesson. For younger children to preteens.

The Trouble with Strangers, Number 9617, 10 minutes, no date, \$195 (rental, \$25).

Karen forgets the lessons she's been taught and is abducted by a stranger. Luckily, the police find her in time, and a policewoman gives Karen some important safety tips to remember. Hitchhiking, playing in deserted places, and taking shortcuts through alleys are all discussed. Karen, and each member of the audience, learn how they can prevent trouble with strangers for themselves and their friends. For younger children.

School Curricula

Personal Safety Curriculum: Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse by Geraldine A. Crisci, MSW. \$10, 101 pages, 1983. Available from: Geraldine A. Crisci, 150 River Dr., Hadley, MA 01035.



Geraldine A. Crisci

The Personal Safety Curriculum is a graduated curriculum for preschool through sixth grade. At each age there are activities to illustrate key concepts. The first concept is the "touch continuum," based on four components—lack of touch, nurturing touch, confusing touch, and exploitative touch. The "touch" continuum gives children permission to touch and be touched as well as the skills to sort out the differences between good and bad touch. The second component of the curriculum is assertiveness training. Students are taught how to say "No" to potentially exploitative invitations through use of body posture, eye contact, facial expressions, verbalization, and repetition. A third component is "brainstorming" solutions to difficult situations, a process gained by increasing problem-solving and enhancing self-confidence. Included are many "what if" situations on safety. The curriculum is further enhanced by a resource guide to books, films and articles. A pre/post evaluation is also included. "Our initial research shows that over 70% of the kindergarten children understand the concepts and know how to react if approached," says Crisci. "By second grade, that figure is 80%."

This is one of the most comprehensive, best researched resources we have found to date. It is highly recommended to schools and those who consult with schools.

Sexual Abuse Prevention Project developed by Wood County Child Evaluation Team Project Committee, price to be determined, 62 pages, available spring, 1984.

Available from: Ms. Judith Knox, Wood County Coordinator, Family & Child Abuse Prevention Center, 130 S. Main St., Suite 306, Bowling Green, OH 43402. Tel. (419) 352-7027.

This project guide is a three-part manual, designed to train teachers, parents and children about child sexual abuse. It is targeted to third or fourth grade children.

The teacher program consists of three weekly, hour-long sessions designed to acquaint teachers with the curriculum and seek their input about modifications specific to each teacher's classroom. The sessions also acquaint teachers with the problem of child sexual abuse and sensitize them to identification of victims and methods for helping.

The parent program is a general meeting held prior to the children's program. In this session, basic information about child sexual abuse is

presented, the film used in the classroom is shown, and the project is explained. A second parent meeting is held after the children's program to review the project.

The children's program begins with a pretest designed to determine the child's degree of awareness about sexual abuse and the child's knowledge of help sources. The first session includes showing the film "Who Do You Tell?" The film stresses that children have a right to protect themselves from sexual abuse and that children should tell someone if they encounter this problem. Group discussion follows the film. A special handout called "Eco-Map" allows the child to make a drawing of his/her individual support system. In the second session the film is reshowed and the group discussion includes role playing hypothetical problem situations. A worksheet called "Hairy Problem" allows children to draw a picture of their biggest problem. The drawings are collected and evaluated by mental health professionals to target any children who may be in need of special attention or observation. A few days later, the post test is given to determine the degree of learning experienced.

This project has been pilot tested in five classrooms with excellent evaluation results. Parents and teachers were very favorable towards the project. The children showed significant knowledge gains. Additionally, eight children who were being sexually molested or at risk were identified. Two adolescents within the school district were identified as sexually victimizing younger children.

The major problem with this resource is that it is targeted for only one age/grade. The materials, however, are excellent. The film "Who Do You Tell?" is available from MTI Tele-Programs, 3710 Commercial Ave., Northbrook, IL, 60062.

Preventing Sexual Abuse: Activities and Strategies for Those Working with Children and Adolescents by Carol A. Plummer, \$20, approximately 173 pages (prepublication copy).

Available from: Learning Publications, Inc., P.O. Box 1326, Holmes Beach, FL 33509.

This is a very complete volume, featuring curriculum for grades K-12. Contains lesson plans for both 3-day and 5-day curriculum. Additional features include a chapter on "making a prevention program work," and a section on involving parents (including sample letters to send to parents explaining the program). An unusual aspect of this curriculum is the inclusion of programming for the developmentally disabled. Pre and post test evaluation instruments are detailed. The curricula is divided into two sections K-6 and 7-12. Teachers will need to adopt activities to the specific grade level. The large selection of activities, the clarity of the objectives, and the support offered in terms of specific guidelines for introducing and developing key concepts, ensure that this resource will become the basis of many school programs. We recommend it highly.



Carol A. Plummer



Preventing Sexual Abuse of Children: A Curriculum for Professionals, Parents, Children by Dora Ahles, \$15, 124 pages.

Available from: Minnesota Curriculum Services Center, 3554 White Bear Ave., White Bear Lake, MN 55110. Tel. (612) 770-3943 or (800) 652-9024.

The philosophy of this curriculum is that parents are the primary educators of their own children. Thus, parents need to know what, when, and how to teach their children about sexual abuse.

The three-part curriculum is extremely detailed and well researched. Part I provides training to professionals who will become parent educators. It covers the following topics: reporting abuse, values clarification, the "touch continuum," indicators of sexual abuse, prevention measures, and helping children protect themselves. Each topic includes pre-made handouts. Part II, the curriculum for parents, covers parent role, presents a rationale for discussing sexual abuse with their children, and contains information and activities appropriate for preschool children. Parents are given an opportunity to practice the activities before using them at home. Included are exercises and information about what to do if you discover your child has been sexually assaulted. Part III, the child education, contains exercises to use directly with the children. The emphasis is on learning "good" vs "not good" touch and "what if" problem solving.

This curriculum is comprehensive and detailed. The weakest part is the section on the curriculum for children which contains only three exercises and is not graduated or in any way modified for varying ages. The volume contains an excellent annotated bibliography.

School Curricula, *continued*

The following curricula were not available for review:

WHO? (We Help Ourselves) by JoAnn Mortens, no date, price lists available.

Available from: Mental Health Association of Dallas County, 2500 Maple Ave., Dallas, TX 75201. Tel. (214) 748-7825.

According to product information, WHO is a graded curriculum for K-12. Three presentations are available (one for K-3, a second for 4-6 and a third for 7-12). Each presentation depends upon a video tape (\$150 each or set of 3 for \$400, free guide included) and a trained presenter.

There is a three-fold thrust—a plan for personal safety, knowing what to do if confronted, and how to seek help if victimized.

A curriculum guide alone is available for \$15. Camera-ready graphics range from \$13.50 to \$60 a set. The videotapes are also available in Spanish.

Talking About Touching With Preschoolers, \$35.

Available from: Committee for Children, P.O. Box 15190, Seattle, WA 98115. Tel. (206) 524-6020.

This program consists of photographs with stories, learning objectives, teacher guidelines and discussion questions. It is a self-contained curriculum with four units: Personal Safety and Decision Making; Touching; Assertiveness; and Community Support Systems.

Also available: Preschool Teacher Training Program (\$360 plus expenses, on site), Train the Trainer Workshops \$360 plus expenses on site per day for either 3 or 5 day sessions), Secondary Curriculum and a videotape entitled "Saying No and Staying Friends."

The Child Assault Prevention Project ("Safe, Strong, and Free"), \$18.50, 1983.

Available from: Women Against Rape, P.O. Box 02084, Columbus, OH 43202. Tel. (614) 291-9751.

Hailed as "the most innovative, effective and comprehensive prevention program in the country." Teaches children assertiveness, peer support, and networking with trusted adults. Parent, teacher and child components. Special consultation available.

Note: A National CAP Training Conference will be held July 16 - 19th in Columbus, Ohio, to train professional educators to use the curriculum. No cost figures are yet available.

Personal Safety Curriculum (Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse), \$20 each, available for Head Start, grades K-2, grades 3-4, grades 5-6, junior high, and high school.

Available from: Ed-U-Care, 3545 Locust Ave., West, Tacoma, WA 98466. Tel. (206) 564-0993.

Each curriculum guide contains daily teaching lessons, student activities, tips on teaching, and extensive information on the problem of child sexual abuse.



Cordelia Anderson Kent

Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Project. An Educational Program for Children by Cordelia Anderson Kent, \$8, pages unknown, 1979.

Available from: Sexual Assault Services, Hennepin County Attorney's Office, Minneapolis, MN 55401.

This curriculum uses the touch continuum (nurturing, pleasuring touch to exploitative, assaultive touch) to teach students K-12 to explore their own beliefs, attitudes, and feelings about interpersonal touch and develop strategies for preventing victimization.

Child Sexual Abuse Prevention: Taking the First Steps by Cordelia Anderson, \$8.50, pages unknown, 1983.

Available from: Illusion Theater, 528 Hennepin Ave., South #205, Minneapolis, MN 55403.

An implementation guide for agencies or individuals interested in the development of prevention programs in their communities with or without the use of theatre.

Sexual Abuse Prevention: A Lesson Plan by Sandra L. Klevin, price unknown, pages unknown, 1981.

Available from: The Coalition for Child Advocacy, Bellingham, WA 98227.

Study Cards

Available from: Illusion Theater, 528 Hennepin Ave., South #205, Minneapolis, MN 55403.

For classroom use in K-8th grades. The cards are 14" x 22" with images of the touch continuum on one side and discussion questions on the other. There are 13 cards per set. \$36.50.

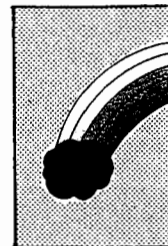
Pamphlets

Come Tell Me Right Away by Linda Sanford, 23 pages, 1982.

Available from: Ed-U-Press, Inc., P.O. Box 583, Fayetteville, NY 13066, Tel. (315) 637-9524.

Price: 1-9 copies, \$2.25; 10-99, \$2.00; 100-999, \$1.75; 1000 or more, \$1.25.

This summary of *The Silent Children: A Parent's Guide to the Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse* is a guide for adults who want to teach children about sexual abuse. How to know when to say no, specific explanations and concrete examples to give children in a constructive and non-threatening manner are presented. An excellent resource.



The Sexually Abused Child: A Primer for Parents, 16 pages, no price information.

This informative booklet discusses how to react if sexual abuse occurs, what to say and how to teach your child to avoid such situations.

Sexual Abuse: Information for Preteens and Teenagers, 12 pages, no price information.

Discusses child sexual abuse, when assaults occur, who is the attacker, what to do to prevent abuse, where to go and what to do for help. An excellent booklet!

Sexually Abused Child—Guidelines for Professionals, 16 pages, no price information.

Includes statistics on child abuse, discussion on types of abuse, signs to look for, and legal and reporting procedures. Designed for teachers, mental health professionals and hospital staff.

Three above available from: Austin Child Guidance Center, 612 W. Sixth, Austin, TX 78701. Tel. (512) 476-6015.

He Told Me Not to Tell, 1979, 25 pages, \$1.50.

Available from: King County Rape Relief, 305 South 43rd, Renton, WA 98055.

A collection of ideas for talking to children about sexual abuse. Covers both prevention and what to do if your child is assaulted. Includes signs that could indicate abuse.



Getting Together: Helping You to Help Yourself by Elizabeth Drake and Anne Gilroy Nelson, 18 pages, 1983.

Available from: Child Care Publications, P.O. Box 12024, University Station, Gainesville, FL 32604

Price: 1-19 copies, \$2.50 each; 20 or more, \$2.00 each plus \$.10 per copy per postage.

This booklet is a simply written guide for pre-adolescent and adolescent female victims of sexual abuse. Presents information on sexual abuse and the law, family dynamics, and counseling to help the child cope with the crisis presented. It is sensitive, well written and direct. Recommended for Child Advocates as well.

The following pamphlets were not available for review:

Concerning Your Child's Personal Safety, \$10 per 100.

Would You Know if Your Child Were Being Molested? \$10 per 100.

Both available from: Ed-U-Care, 3545 Locust Ave. West, Tacoma, WA 98466. Tel. (206) 564-0993.

What Everyone Should Know about the Sexual Abuse of Children by L. Channing, no price information, 1982.

Available from: Channing L. Bete Co., Inc., South Deerfield, MA.

Public Service Announcements

Public Service Announcement, 30 sec.

Available from: Rape Crisis Network, Lutheran Social Services, N. 1226 Howard St., Spokane, WA 99201.

A seven-year old girl and an eight-year old boy tell children they have rights to their own body, and to tell someone you trust if someone is touching private parts.

Book Review...

Child Abuse Prediction: Policy Implications: by Raymond H. Starr, Editor, Ballinger Publishing Company, 54 Church Street, Cambridge, MA 02138.

In *Child Abuse Prediction: Policy Implications* contributing authors discuss various issues such as the problems of defining child abuse; the relevance of child abuse theory to prediction and prevention; the findings of research studies about the causes of abuse; the clinical relevance of approaches to prediction and prevention; the usefulness of screening questionnaires; and the legal implications of screening for risk.

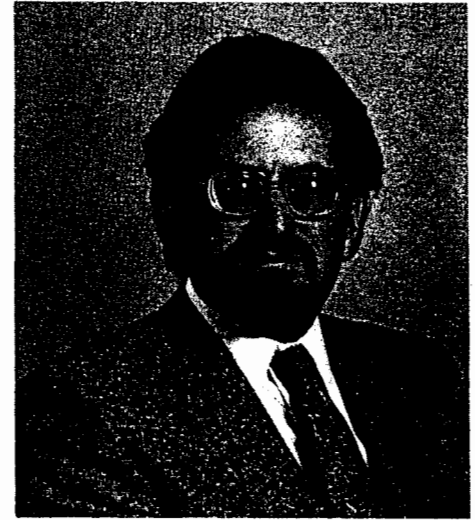
A book for professionals, it is written in very technical terms. Many of the authors substantiate their ideas with a research base—either their own or other professionals'. The general purpose appears to be

that of looking critically at the possibilities and probabilities of child abuse and neglect being a predictable event.

The general tenor of the book is cautious. It emphasizes that there are currently no instruments which can accurately predict child abuse. Instruments are useful, however, for predicting risk. There are problems with this use which are primarily ethical in nature. All contributors discuss the inevitable occurrence of false negatives and false positives, and the potential negative consequences.

The information in this book will prove very useful to professionals. In an era of decreased resources, knowing the implications for predictive techniques can assist professionals in their use for prevention and intervention strategies.

—Charlotte McNulty



Raymond H. Starr

Prevention, continued from p. 4

abused and neglected children as not abused and neglected" (p. 98). As a result, Kotelchuck states that prediction of child abuse and neglect "is quite far from accurate...We do not really know what fully predicts child abuse and neglect yet" (p. 99).

Problem: The stigma of labeling. Related to the problem of misclassification is the issue of labeling. While referring to the problem of false positives, Gelles (1982) suggests that "the stigma of being called a child abuser, one of the major pejorative terms we use for an inadequate parent, will weigh heavily on the parent's ability to function and reinforce in the parent a feeling of being deficient. We may, in fact, create a self-fulfilling prophecy, and produce maltreatment as a result of our prevention efforts" (p. 3). In a recent interview, Raymond Starr, editor of *Child Abuse Prediction: Policy Implications*, also voiced concern about the problem of labeling. "I feel confused about prediction strategies. On the one hand, I would like to see mandatory parenting education and the use of health visitors for people determined to be at risk of abusing and neglecting their children. But that forces us to label. I don't think we have adequately addressed the problem of labeling."

Because of these and other problems, even the authors of screening instruments are not at all comfortable with their use as tools for predicting child abuse and neglect. This discomfort is succinctly addressed by Schneider (1982) when referring to her Michigan Screening Profile Of Parenting. "While we have been refining this questionnaire and giving it to a variety of different samples over the past twelve years, we still do not know if we have a specific predictive questionnaire for potential child abusers" (p. 158).

This concern was reiterated in a recent interview with Susan Harris, Director of the Child Abuse Unit for Studies, Education and Services (CAUSES), Illinois

Masonic Medical Center. While referring to the Maternal Personality Inventory, a screening tool developed at their center in the seventies and which has been used extensively in research for many years, she says "We would never say this tool is going to predict who is going to abuse or neglect a child. We would never try to predict that event. We do find it useful, however, as an indicator of a potential parenting problem."

What, then, are the benefits of using predictive screening instruments?

Benefit: The first and most obvious benefit is in the area of primary prevention—determining the possibility of risk of parenting problems. The majority of people in the field appear to feel that screening instruments have potential value in identifying an "at risk" population. "We no longer feel that we are close to specific predictions of child abuse alone—we are identifying people with a high potential to develop some sort of parent-child interaction problem" (Schneider, 1982, p. 158). While this does not get around the problem of misclassification or of labeling, it does give practitioners a tool for assisting in the assessment of people who may need prevention programs. Of course, there is a solution to the misclassification and labeling problem: provide parenting classes and support to all new parents.

Benefit: A second potential benefit is in the area of secondary prevention—assisting protective service workers in determining who is likely to reabuse a child or who is at risk of seriously harming a child. This use of predictive screening scales is very new and experimental. VCPN staff will be reporting on this use of predictive screening in the summer, 1984, issue.

Screening for Primary Prevention Intervention

A great many researchers and social scientists are in support of using screening

techniques to prevent the occurrence of child abuse and neglect (Gray, Cutler, Dean, Kempe, Greenburg & Hurley, 1977; Helfer, 1978; Hurd, 1979; Martin, 1982; Schneider, 1982; Schneider, Hoffmeister & Helfer, 1982).

The consensus is: Let's do it early. "Early identification programs seek to screen for those parents who are more likely to have problems with parent-child interaction than the general population. The prevention counterpart of these screening programs attempts to intervene with educational and training experiences, thereby modifying or eliminating the basic causes of unusual rearing practices that produce children with a variety of difficulties" (Helfer, 1978, p. 364).

While there are other specified periods where parents and children are easily accessible, there is none quite as important and convenient to the primary prevention of child abuse or neglect as the perinatal period. That is, the period centered around the birth of a child. For a variety of reasons this might be the optimum time for screening. First, it is a time when virtually all parents come to the attention of a highly professional organization, the medical community. This allows for a structured environment to introduce various screening techniques. In addition, most parents-to-be or new parents are open to suggestions and advice, particularly when this is the birth of their first child. It is very important to note that prevention programs are not targeted to just those parents who are seeking medical perinatal care at public clinics. Prevention programs may screen virtually all patients seeking care because of the expected birth or actual birth of a child.

Different times in the perinatal process allow for different screening options. The prenatal period is a time when pen and paper questionnaires as well as interviews are useful. (See "Perinatal Screening

(continued on page 6)

Theater...continued from p. 2



Jackie Goldberg (l.) and Brad Greenquist in some upbeat choreography.

Virginia's Effort - "Hugs and Kisses"

The impetus for a child sexual abuse prevention play originated with Ann Childress, Program Specialist with the Child Protective Services Unit of Virginia's Department of Social Services. Childress

was familiar with theatre projects in other states and wanted to have a similar resource for Virginia. She, along with Phyllis Briedenbaugh, Chief of the Bureau of Child Welfare Services, approached the Virginia Chapter of the National Committee for Prevention of Child Abuse to request funding. Their board endorsed the concept and in the summer of 1982, raised money for writing the script.

Childress and VaNCPA representatives approached Theatre IV about the project. Theatre IV is a Richmond-based theatre group that tours children's shows, mostly to schools. Headed by Bruce Miller, the company has gone from a shoestring operation in 1975 to being Virginia's largest touring theatre. Last year they served an audience of 136,586.

Miller was intrigued with the idea. He contacted Terry Bliss, with whom he had worked previously on several special projects. Bliss agreed to become the playwright. She brought a varied background to the task, including

experience teaching and directing children's theatre in northern Virginia, and working with hearing impaired children as an audiologist for five years. Together, she and Miller had created a number of theatre programs for hearing impaired children and adults. Bliss has recently completed a law degree and plans to practice in an area involving children's rights.

We were curious why the choice to write a script from scratch was made. Miller explained, "We saw a videotape of 'Bubbylonia.' 'Bubbylonia' is about a space creature—a person from the planet 'Bubbylonia' who comes to earth in a bubble."

"It's probably what society was ready for at the time," Miller continued, "But not what we wanted. We wanted our show to be about real people, not spacemen or animals. Most people say, 'Why not use chipmunks?' but I disagree. It's something I believe in. It's most effective to write

(continued on page 7)

Prevention, continued from p. 5

Tools" for various instruments which can be used for this assessment). Most interviews assess parents' attitudes about the pregnancy, about the pending birth and about children. In addition, a medical history, and a personal parenting history can add valuable information about past problems. These combined information sources can alert trained professionals to families with potential parenting or abuse problems.

The birth is an ideal time to assess the parent-parent interaction and the parent-child interaction, including the choices the father makes concerning being present during birth, and his subsequent behavior at the time of birth. This assessment can be done primarily through observation with limited interview. A well-trained nurse can look for various target behaviors: How does the mother act during delivery? What does she say about the child, about the situation, or about the father? How does she respond to the child after birth—accepting and warm, or rejecting? How involved in the birth process is the father—is he supportive and caring, or does he stay in a corner and not get involved? What do the parents say about the child after delivery? Do the parents visit the nursery frequently? Do the parents get as involved in the care of the child as they possibly can, such as engage in the option for rooming in, or do they ignore the care until the time to prepare for departure? All of these are clues that can assist a professional in assessing the quality of involvement between parents and child.

It is important to note that more and more researchers and practitioners are pointing to the importance of observing the child as well as the parents (Hurd, 1979;

Martin, Schwarzbeck, 1979). Research to date has highlighted the importance of certain child constitutional factors in the occurrence of abusive behavior. These factors include development delays and birth defects, premature births, medical problems, eye contact, and temperament, especially when there is a mismatch and the parent perceives infant behavior as rejecting. Such problems need to be assessed and combined with the observations being made about the parents in order to determine the degree of likelihood of abuse or parenting problems.

Of course, once there is a suspicion that there is a possibility of risk, intervention should occur and services should be provided. At the prenatal stage, child development classes, support groups, and prepared childbirth classes can be offered. At the birthing stage, support and information can be provided. In severe cases, referral to counseling is an option. In addition, postnatal follow-up can occur in the form of a health visitor who can be a volunteer or a paid professional. This person continues to assess the quality of interaction and offers support. In addition, the postnatal period is the prime time for group meetings to learn child developmental information, realistic expectations, parenting techniques, and most important, to offer support.

The concept of preventative intervention is not without ethical concerns. Helfer (1978) suggests some basic ideas which could minimize ethical questions: 1) A balance must be achieved among the rights of all parties involved, including the child, the parents, and the society at large. 2) Both parts of the program—i.e. the screening for and the training of high-risk parents—must be either mandatory (every one takes part as a routine matter) or voluntary. 3)

Informed consent must be obtained for all voluntary components. 4) Elements of the program which might have a coercive influence on the parents must be identified and minimized. 5) Since a few parents inevitably will be mistakenly labeled as high risk through false positive test results, the emotional impact of such labeling must be minimized.

Are there perinatal programs in Virginia? Yes, fortunately, there are some. VCPN staff was able to identify three: 1) Pride In Parenting in Norfolk, a program offering education and support to parents after the baby is born; 2) Good Beginnings in Portsmouth, also designed to give education and support to parents after the birth of a child; and 3) Teen Parent Project in Lynchburg, which offers education and support specifically to teenage parents. In all programs, initial contact is made in the hospital whenever possible. It is likely that there are more perinatal programs in Virginia. If so, we would love to hear about them.

Decisions being made about the use of screening techniques must be made deliberately and with full knowledge of the consequences. There is, of course, some concern about the mislabeling of a parent as being at risk of abuse, whether it is for purposes of preventative intervention or investigation. However, one might suggest it is easier to think about the consequences of that choice over the consequences of screening out a situation which then results in tragedy. What are we trying to predict and prevent? "It seems clear that the response must include our wish to prevent the pain, damage, and unhappiness in children that result from suboptimal parenting" (Martin, 1982, p. 189).

References are available upon request.

Theater...continued from p. 6

about real people with real problems. Also 'Bubbylonia' had no music. I'm a firm believer that music is pivotal to children's theatre."

With these initial assumptions, Miller and Bliss began what was to be a two-year collaborative effort of creating and polishing a script. It was an effort that had many long-into-the-night discussions and much research.

"Since I had no background in child abuse, I began making as many contacts as possible," explained Bliss. After consulting with Childress, she attended a Parents Anonymous/Parents United conference, began reading books, and contacted groups of adults who were molested as children.

Bliss met with people throughout the state. "I thought there would be divergent concerns to weigh. However, there were not. People all over expressed the same concerns. I probed. I looked, for instance, to see if I could find differences between ethnic groups or ages. There seemed to be none."

Bliss continued, "I found the same concepts stressed over and over. The most frequently mentioned were the child's right to say 'no'; the child having a right over his/her own body; the fact that sexual contact is never the child's fault; the importance of stressing that children do not lie about sexual encounters; and, the high percentage of abuse between children and their closest relatives, most often a father or father-figure."

"We created the dog, 'Hugs', to whom the character of Judy first tells her secret, early on. Later, at a meeting with the Harrisonburg group of women who were molested as children," noted Bliss; "The group thought the idea was perfect. One woman told me, 'I never talked to people, I talked to all the animals on our farm. That was safe.' Both Bruce and I were very excited that we had come upon a concept that was not only a good theatrical device but was also thematically valid."

"We had the title before we had anything," Miller interjected. "Although we had some concern that it would not reflect exactly what we had wanted."

"The idea of the bathing-suit area to indicate a child's private parts came from one of the multidisciplinary teams," added Bliss. "It seemed to work—it was specific but non-offensive."

"We had many, many people read the play and comment on it," Miller noted. "It was a long process," agreed Bliss. "People don't understand how much time and thought go into creating a script. It was frustrating when we went on the showcase tour to realize that people thought we simply made arbitrary and snap decisions about characters, when actually there were knock-down, drag-out fights over most details."

While the script was being written, the work of funding the show was undertaken

by VaNCPCA. The group applied for, and received, an \$11,600 grant from the Virginia Family Violence Prevention Program. The grant was sufficient for funding 30 performances to schools and included costs of set construction, music, and costumes.

Miller began the task of selecting actors. "I think this play demands a special sort of actor. I looked for those who were sensitive and intelligent, who would feel and who had an emotional commitment. Even though there is a great deal of singing, I chose people solely for their acting ability."

Jackie Goldberg plays Betsy, a school-girl, in "Hugs and Kisses." "I was very sheltered," she explained. "I had the opportunity to attend a victims' group in Richmond. So many of the women were bitter towards men. All were from upper and middle class families—a doctor's daughter, a minister's daughter, a lawyer's daughter. I was surprised how open they were."

"I had no idea sexual abuse was so prevalent," added Michele Wagner who plays Judy, the victim. The article in 'TIME' this fall really opened my eyes."

We wondered if the cast had any concerns about acting in "Hugs and Kisses." "I was real dubious, kind of leery. I wanted to see what it would look like," replied Sara Stevenson. Stevenson plays Mrs. Sawyer, the teacher, and 'Hugs,' the dog. Paul Tomayko who acts as Al, a school boy, added, "It would be bad if the play were not done well. I think a lot of care is needed." "I was worried," said Wagner, "But whatever concerns I had disappeared the first day of rehearsal. Even from that first day, it worked so well."

While rehearsals continued, VaNCPCA and Miller were still obtaining input from groups around the state. At a meeting of the Governor's Advisory Committee's Subcommittee on Multidisciplinary Teams, the suggestion of "showcasing" "Hugs and Kisses" for interested parents, professionals, and school personnel was raised. "The concept was obvious," remarked Cheryn Durette, president of VaNCPCA. "Something as emotional as a prevention play for child sexual abuse would not be booked into schools sight unseen. The minute the suggestion was made, we knew we had no choice but to do it."

Working quickly, Durette and Miller, along with help from VaNCPCA members, social services, and multidisciplinary teams, arranged for seven showcase performances in each of the seven regions of the state. Performed in late September and early October, "Hugs and Kisses" was received with tremendous enthusiasm by a majority of viewers.

Each show had a discussion panel for audience reactions. We asked the cast what concerns were most commonly expressed.



Paul Tomayko (r.) shares a secret with his furry friend Hugs.

Wagner began, "Two places in particular were concerned that a great number of children might report sexual abuse and overwhelm teachers and social services. Our response was that VaNCPCA will be training the teachers in each school that books a performance. Professionals will always be at each show to consult both with the teachers and with the children. The teachers are not responsible to solve the problem or to counsel the child—only to report."

"The things some people objected to in the showcase are the things the victims told us were the most important," commented Stevenson. "Some people didn't like the use of the step-father as the perpetrator. Some wanted the abuser to be a stranger, yet we know most abuse is done by family members. Others wanted it to be a mother, yet abuse by mothers seems rare. Others thought we were being unfair to step-parents who have a hard job anyway; yet proportionally, step-parents seem at greater risk."

"Another objection concerned the instruction to 'tell your teacher.' The teacher was chosen," explained Tomako, "because every child has one. Children usually respect teachers even if they don't like them, and teachers are required reporters under the law. Some people wanted children to tell their mothers. Yet the victims tell us that they tried that and were not listened to. Others wanted a larger number of people listed—police, nurses, counselors, etc. We felt that, especially for the very young child, offering too many options would simply be confusing."

What did people like about the show? "Most commented on the explanation of good versus bad touch," said Goldberg. "Others liked the use of 'bathing-suit area' for explaining what the child's 'private body areas' were," noted Wagner. Stevenson added, "Many complimented us on stressing that it's not the child's fault and that it is okay to tell. Hopefully, children will not feel so alone if something bad does happen."

(continued on page 8)

Theater...continued from p. 7

We asked Miller what changes were made in the play as a result of the showcases. "There were very few changes, really. We picked up some wording changes. We are going to stress that running away is the wrong solution. Most reactions were not to change anything. The victims, in particular, felt the play expressed their feelings and that the language was exactly correct."

Audience reaction was measured by survey forms given to fifty members of each audience. The data is being put on computer, but hand examination indicates that responses were uniformly, enthusiastically positive. Several members of the Harrisonburg incest victims' group were surveyed. Their responses were even stronger. "This play is essential. If I had seen it when I was young, my life would have been entirely different," exclaimed one member.

Future Plans

VaNCPA has been swamped with over 100 requests for the play. With only 30 free performances to distribute, what will happen to other requests?

Durrette explained that a committee has been formed to work with local people and the area MD teams in deciding how to award performances. "We only have 4 per region with 2 'floaters.' Some school districts may be able to fund their own

performances. Others may get local service groups to raise funds."

Unfortunately, VaNCPA is unable to fund additional performances. The chapter went into debt in order to fund the showcases and is soliciting help to pay back their bank loan.

Miller noted that he was involved in an effort to identify funding sources. Durrette and Miller would appreciate any ideas for help in funding. They would like to be able to honor all the requests.

The cost of booking the play is \$300 per performance. Booking is not limited to Virginia. Theatre IV has traveled as far south as Florida and as far west as Indianapolis.

A videotape of the show has been made and is available, not for showing to children, but to allow school personnel and parents who were unable to attend the showcase to preview the show. Miller doubts that videotape is a viable answer to the distribution problem. "The show was designed for stage and for audience participation. I doubt that it would be effective with children in video format."

Effectiveness

What is it that makes a play effective as a teaching tool for children? Miller has a ready response. "Kids love plays! A play is supposed to be fun and interesting. It's special. So the child is more alert and more receptive to the messages."

Miller gives an added benefit. "A play brings words to life. A child can see people on the stage and can identify with the characters. This gives the child a unique chance to meet someone else who is going through the same problem. It breaks the isolation. There's a friend right there with no distance."

The cast is quick to give an example. "When we did the showcase in Harrisonburg," relates Stevenson, "We stopped at a restaurant for a sandwich. A teenager who was a victim came up to us. She said the play expressed all her feelings so well. She wished she had seen it 10 years ago." "Her mother was with her," added Goldberg. "They talked to us for a long while. They are both in treatment now." "You know," reflected Wagner, "That's the first time we really knew that victims would be talking to us."

And the person who was the catalyst for Virginia's effort—how does Ann Childress feel about the play? "I want people to remember that even though the play will result in greater reporting, that 'Hugs and Kisses' is first of all a prevention play. The message will stay with children and be a consciousness-raising experience. The concepts will offer them some protection when they are approached." Childress ended with a statement typical of the statewide response, "I'm totally pleased. I couldn't be more satisfied with the play."



Center for Child Abuse Education
Psychology Department
Harrisonburg, Va. 22807

Address Correction Requested

Funds for This publication are provided by:
National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect
Children's Bureau
Administration for Children, Youth and Families
Department of Health and Human Services
Grant no. 3c/22/06

and

Virginia Department of Social Services
Bureau of Child Protective Services

Non Profit Organization
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
Harrisonburg, Virginia
PERMIT NO. 4